

ABSTRACT

THESIS: Genre Effects on the Generalization Inference

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The constructionist theory has emerged as a leading perspective in the field of reading inferences and makes the assumption that readers cannot generate inferences when text is inconsiderate or lacking coherence. The generalization inference has been documented as allowing the reader to condense multiple, consecutive propositions into a singular macroproposition. Research has shown that the genre of a text can affect the perception and the set of processes used by the reader to comprehend text. In the present study, participants read ten short narratives, eight of which contained generalization inference lexical decision tasks with genre and coherence of text manipulated. Participants were shown to be no more likely to draw the generalization inference from incoherent text when primed by genre, but were shown to be capable of drawing the generalization inference from incoherent text. These results do not support the constructionist hypothesis and suggest that further research is needed.